



FINAL REPORT

BULGARIA JUDICIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABA/ CEELI American Bar Association/ Central European and
Eurasian Law Initiative

CIP(s)	Court(s) in Partnership
CLRP	Commercial Law Reform Project
CMS	Electronic Case Management System
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
EU	European Union
EWMI	East-West Management Institute
GOB	Government of Bulgaria
IT	Information Technology
JDP	Judicial Development Project for Bulgaria
JSA	Judicial System Act
JSI	Judicial Strengthening Initiative
MC(s)	Model Court(s)
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTC	Magistrates Training Center
NACC	National Association of Court Clerks
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NIJ	National Institute of Justice
OGI	Open Government Initiative
SJC	Supreme Judicial Council
TOT	Training Of Trainers
UJB	Union of Judges in Bulgaria
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

I. PROJECT PURPOSE

The East-West Management Institute Judicial Development Project (“JDP”) in Bulgaria fell within USAID/Bulgaria Mission Strategic Objective S.O. 2.2, *Improved Judicial System that Better Supports Democratic Processes and Market Reforms*. The strategic objective of the JDP was an independent judiciary that supports democratic processes and market reforms and assists Bulgaria achieve the broader goal of EU accession. Within this larger objective, the JDP sought to achieve two broad and mutually reinforcing ends: a better qualified judiciary, comprised of well-trained judges and court staff, and a more efficient and transparent court system.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Among the most noteworthy of the JDP’s accomplishments are the following:

- The creation of the National Institute of Justice, a highly respected, state-supported judicial training facility, that provides high quality educational programs to new and sitting magistrates, court and MOJ staff;
- The development of innovative, sustainable training curricula for judges and court staff;
- The creation of a cadre of highly skilled local judicial and court staff trainers who are capable of training additional trainers themselves;
- The establishment of 11 Model Courts and 10 Courts in Partnership which exhibit improved work processes, court automation, improved public access, increased utilization of physical space, and continued professional development and training of judges and staff;
- A new, uniform file folder and sequential case numbering system introduced in all 153 Bulgarian courts;
- A strengthened Judicial Systems Act that provides for the National Institute of Justice and improves the administration of justice;
- A revised and improved court operations regulation that establishes the position of Court Administrator and incorporates improvements developed in the Model Courts with JDP assistance;
- A National Strategy for Reform of the Judiciary and Action Plan for Implementation adopted by the Bulgarian government to serve as a blueprint for judicial reforms;
- Amendments to the Constitution of Bulgaria that improve provisions relating to judicial immunity, tenure, judicial evaluation, and the terms of office for the administrative managers of the judiciary;

- The creation of a national court clerks' association that boasts nearly 1,500 members and has been an energetic force for professionalism within the courts and an effective voice for court staff on judicial reform issues;
- The development of a locally developed, world-class quality electronic case management system that is a comprehensive tool for tracking and managing all cases at all levels of the judicial system; and
- The successful piloting of a verbatim court hearing recording system that would promote greater transparency and openness in the courts.

III. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS ACHIEVED

The discussion that follows summarizes and provides detailed information on all major activities undertaken by the project over the life of the Cooperative Agreement.

A. Judicial Training

1.1 Institutional Development

A central goal of the JDP was the establishment of institutionalized, systematic and sustainable judicial training in Bulgaria. When EWMI launched the project in September 1999, there was no such system of training in place for the country's judges. A new NGO, the Magistrates Training Center (MTC), opened in March of that year. The strategy of the JDP was to develop the capacity of the MTC as a high quality training institution and then garner state budgetary support for its operations.

During the first two years of the JDP, EWMI provided sustained support for the institutional development and independence of the MTC. As an initial step, through its partner the International Development Law Institute (IDLI), EWMI conducted an Institutional Assessment of MTC Capabilities that was discussed extensively with the MTC leadership. These discussions led to the development of the Implementation Plan for MTC Institutional Development in 2000, which the JDP then worked to put into effect with the MTC Board and staff. Among the activities carried out by the JDP in support of the MTC during 2000-2001 included: 1) A national judicial training needs assessment (the first of its kind in Bulgaria) on which the New Judge and Sitting Judge curricula have been based (see Section 1.2, below).; 2) the development of a Strategic Plan for the MTC; 3) US-based training for five MTC staff members on the management and administration of judicial training centers; 4) specialized financial training for the MTC's accounting staff; 5) the development of pilot evaluation methods; 6) assistance networking with donors, implementers, and key stakeholders, 7) development of an MTC informational packet for marketing purposes; and 8) grant writing training and assistance. This assistance, along with the JDP's curriculum development assistance and substantive training conducted in conjunction with the MTC (see Section 1.2 below), helped transform the MTC into a highly regarded training institute. A survey of magistrates conducted by MSI in early 2003 found that over 90% viewed the MTC as very effective in the provision of training.

Beginning in 2002, the JDP began to focus on positioning the MTC to become the proposed new National Institute of Justice (NIJ). This process was driven by draft legislation amending the Judicial System Act, which proposed to require training for new judges and prosecutors and establish the NIJ as a permanent, state-supported judicial training facility (for a discussion of EWMI's role in developing the JSA amendments, see Section 2.4 below). The amendments established the NIJ under the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and did not acknowledge that the MTC would become the NIJ. Upon its passage by parliament, the amended JSA was subsequently determined to be unconstitutional in several respects by the Constitutional Court. Ultimately, the creation of the NIJ was left intact, but it was placed under the authority of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) instead of the MOJ.

The MTC originally was supported by a direct grant from USAID, which ended in April 2002. Using its own funds, EWMI provided the MTC with a grant of \$125,000, allowing the center to continue at its previous funding level for an additional seven months while sending a clear message to the Bulgarian decision-makers and international community that forward movement by the government must be taken to establish a national judicial training institute and to transform the MTC into that institute. The JDP was able to leverage this funding as an incentive for the Bulgarian government to positively acknowledge that the MTC would become the new NIJ. This effort began to generate positive acknowledgements by stakeholders in the fourth quarter of 2002.

Because of the ambiguous status of the MTC in light of the revised JSA, the JDP placed considerable emphasis from late 2002 through 2003 in promoting the transition of the MTC into the NIJ. This effort included the development of an outline of the legal steps required to transform the MTC to the NIJ; identification of a transformation strategy including necessary non-legal steps; JDP-initiated discussions with the Minister of Justice, the Chairman of the MTC Board, and other stakeholders; and efforts to build international support for the transformation. At the same time, the JDP worked diligently to insure that the necessary regulatory, procedural and practical foundations were put in place for the establishment of the NIJ.

The JDP's efforts led to tangible results. The Government of Bulgaria appropriated approximately \$765,000 in 2004 funding for the NIJ. The JDP's active pressure on key Bulgarian actors to appoint the NIJ Board in a timely fashion resulted in the appointment of all the members by the end of 2003. The JDP researched and drafted a set of operational regulations that reflected regional and local values and presented the draft to a local working group that discussed and modified the regulations. The NIJ Regulations were also approved in 2003. In addition, after an extensive and complicated search, the JDP and Bulgarian officials identified an adequate facility for the NIJ. Finally, and of critical importance, the MTC's key personnel, material resources, and curricula were effectively incorporated into the NIJ.

During the final year of the JDP, EWMI worked to provide the NIJ with a sound initial footing. The JDP carried out key renovations to the NIJ building that were completed on time and under budget. The JDP successfully promoted the initiative for the NIJ Board to recruit and hire a highly-respected and qualified director. With JDP support, the NIJ also completed its internal regulations, piloted a new procurement program and continued to build linkages with the French Phare project

that was designing a new six-month training program for new judges. The culmination of the JDP's efforts was the formal opening of the renovated NIJ building on November 1, 2004, presided over by the US Ambassador, the USAID Mission Director, the Minister of Justice, the Supreme Court Chairman and the new NIJ Director.

Largely as a result of its efforts, the JDP leaves in place a national judicial training institute with an effective management structure, a building that includes training rooms, office space, computer labs, library, and other needed space, trained staff, operational regulations, internal regulations, and a budget from the Bulgarian government.

1.2 Curriculum Development

As the starting point for its curriculum development work, the JDP in 2000 conducted a survey of judges to identify their own perceived training needs. Over 600 judges from all over the country completed the survey. Newly appointed judges identified their needs to be the application of civil and criminal procedures, as well as training in obligations, family law, and labor law. For more experienced judges, the focus of training needs included human rights, intellectual property law, securities, and succession law. All judges indicated a need for training in judicial skills, such as determining issues, collecting evidence, writing judgments and orders, and writing reasons for decisions.

Informed by the survey results, the JDP and MTC developed two curricula, New Judges Basic Training and Continuing Judicial Training. The curriculum for New Judge Basic Training was designed in a modular format, initially consisting of three levels and later including two more levels. Each level built upon the other level and incorporated judges' actual courtroom experience. The curriculum was also designed to allow junior judges with more than three years of experience to take courses at Levels Two and Three. The targeted audience was judges who were changing assignments, being promoted, or simply wanted to enhance their judicial knowledge and skills. The Continuing Judicial Training program was designed with a core curriculum based on the judicial survey results and was coupled with a program focusing on topical issues that reflect legislative changes or other novel initiatives.

In 2001, the JDP designed and delivered a comprehensive evaluation instrument for both of the new curricula. The evaluation, which included focus groups and written questionnaires, focused on program content, faculty delivery and knowledge of subject areas, sequencing and timing of TOT trainings, logistics, materials and overall quality of presentations. The evaluation yielded important insights into strengths and weaknesses of the training and resulted in improvements to the training modules.

Further refinements to the New Judge Training and Continuing Judge training continued throughout the life of the JDP. Course outlines were developed for all levels of the New Judge Training, providing documentation of what is to be taught with specific citations to statutes and cases. The outlines facilitated consistency of information being delivered to new judges and were crucial to the sustainability of the training, particularly in light of the MTC-NIJ transition. An additional level of New

Judge Training was added for EU law. The use of case studies and increased participation by trainees were additional modifications as the programs evolved.

In addition to the two main curricula discussed above, the JDP helped develop other specific training programs. The JDP helped two Model Court¹ chairpersons develop a course for judges with administrative responsibilities. Other specialized programs included courses on combating human trafficking, EU intellectual property law, and the new procurement law, among others. With JDP training, the MTC/NIJ staff became adept at approaching curriculum design in a systematic manner, beginning with a needs assessment, prioritization of courses, course outlines, and training of trainers. Once piloted, new curricula were evaluated and modified accordingly.

During the course of the project, the JDP trained a total of 1,784 judges. The annual breakdown of judge training is as follows:

Year	Judges Trained
2000	80
2001	182
2002	68
2003	209
2004	1245

A complete list of all training programs conducted by the JDP, including subject matter, target audience, dates, number of participants and faculty, is attached as Annex A.

1.3 Training of Trainers

Developing a cadre of skilled trainers was critical for the long-term development of judicial training in Bulgaria. From the beginning of the project, the JDP devoted considerable resources to designing, conducting and indigenizing effective Training of Trainers (TOT) programs. The JDP developed a Basic TOT program to acquaint participants with adult learning theory and presentation skills. For graduates of that program, the JDP developed an Advanced TOT program, which focused on advanced delivery techniques, non-verbal communication skills, group facilitation skills, and techniques for dealing with the difficult participant, as well as providing participants with an opportunity to develop their own courses and supporting materials.

By 2001, the JDP's efforts had progressed to the point that the training of trainers could be conducted by Bulgarian master trainers who had excelled in the JDP TOT programs. This was a key step that insured that the Bulgarian judiciary was capable of generating its own cadre of skilled trainers. The JDP worked to produce more master trainers (by the end of 2002 there were five), and also introduced some innovations into the TOT effort. In 2002, for example, the JDP combined court clerks with judges in the TOT programs for the first time. This approach helped promote the

¹ The Model Courts were originally referred to by the JDP as "Model Pilot Courts." The latter term was also used in the Cooperative Agreement. The JDP adopted the current nomenclature when the Courts in Partnership program was introduced in 2003, to reflect the fact that the original "pilot" courts were now effective models for other courts. For the sake of consistency, this report uses the term "Model Court" exclusively.

themes of teamwork within the judiciary and mutual respect between judges and staff. By 2003, several court clerks had become master trainers.

TOT programming also benefited from US study tours focusing on advanced TOT concepts that the JDP helped organize in conjunction with World Learning. Judge and clerk trainers who participated in these trips returned with new ideas and enthusiasm that they injected into their courses.

A highlight of the JDP's TOT efforts was the organization of the first-ever Trainers' Retreat in 2003. The program was organized and delivered by the Bulgarian trainers themselves, and brought together over 40 court clerks and one judge to discuss issues they faced as trainers, various training methodologies, and shared experiences and successes. The end result was a more cohesive group of dedicated trainers who gained additional training skills. In 2004, the Trainers' Retreat was repeated and half of the participants were judges. The trainer presenters were also half judges and half clerks. The expansion of the judge participants signified the growing partnership between all judicial system trainers which leads to a more cohesive training program.

1.4 Other Judicial Training Highlights

The JDP was very successful at incorporating study tours to the United States and Europe to further its in-country efforts. Most of these programs were conducted under the auspices of World Learning. Programs included the following: Advanced TOT Study Tour to the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada (2002, 2003); Two Model Court President and Key Staff Study Tours to Oregon, Virginia, Ohio, Washington, DC (2002); Case Delay Reduction Study Tour to Arizona and Colorado (2003); and Judicial Ethics Study Tour to Austria and Spain (2004).

The JDP's final judicial training program was its most ambitious. In December 2004, the JDP hosted the first National Judicial Conference for Bulgaria, with 1,100 judges and an additional 200 participants in attendance. The President of Bulgaria, the United States Ambassador and the Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Bulgaria opened the conference, along with other dignitaries. The attendance of such a substantial number of judges sent a powerful and public message of the desire within the judiciary for court reform and the need for judicial education and training on critical issues, including EU accession matters. The agenda focused on the practical aspects of the legal culture and included programs on judicial cooperation, civil enforcement, human rights, and the revision work on the civil and criminal procedures. Judges commented on the value of meeting other judges and discussing formally and informally the judicial concerns they faced. It is anticipated that the National Judicial Conference will become an annual event.

1.5 Court Staff Training

Improving the capacity of court staff is a critical element of judicial reform and was an important goal of the JDP. Non-judicial court employees not only play a significant role in the efficiency of judicial operations, but they are also the public face of the court in their daily interactions with litigants, attorneys, and others in need of judicial services.

The JDP's court clerk training efforts began in earnest in 2001 with the introduction of Customer Service training. Perhaps no other course offered had more direct impact than this program. It introduced new ways to work with the "customer" through a highly interactive and practical format. Customers were identified both as external (such as attorneys and citizens) and internal (such as colleagues and judges). The idea that "customers" are also colleagues led to improved teamwork and collegiality within the courts. Customer Service training also recognized the need to deliver special service to disadvantaged people. The trainers were very competent court clerks from several courts throughout Bulgaria who offered not only new content but implemented what they trained in their own courts. Throughout the Model Courts there was evidence of the impact of this course. Court clerks now use techniques learned in the program to defuse anger, calm distraught customers, and manage information more effectively. Court clerks wear name badges, and in some courts, uniform clothing. The result was that customers perceive a higher level of professionalism and clerks have increased self-esteem.

The JDP's clerk training offerings expanded in 2002, with the introduction of programs such as Team Building, Grammar for Court Secretaries, Stress and Time Management, and Code of Conduct Training. These programs were offered to court clerks in the Model Courts as well as other courts.

The JDP continued to add training programs in subsequent years. A New Clerk Orientation training was added in conjunction with a manual developed by the JDP for new clerks. The materials were offered on a CD to allow individual courts to personalize the materials and training by adding names of the court chairperson and key staff members, court resource numbers, and addresses. The New Clerk Orientation training also introduced a shift from centrally located clerk training programs to local training offered by local court trainers to their court staff, which strengthened training sustainability and helped build local capacity. Other specialized training programs developed and implemented by the JDP included Summons Clerks Training, Accounting Training, Working with Criminal Cases, Working with Civil Cases, Leadership, Rights and Obligations and Model Hiring Procedures.

As noted above, the JDP was innovative in its combined training of judges and clerks in selected programs, particularly the Team Building, Training of Trainers and Strategic Planning courses. This was a novel concept for Bulgarians, and at first this mixing of professions was not well received. Over time, however, more and more judges and clerks saw the benefits of this approach. They realized that training provides a safe environment to break down barriers and increase mutual understanding and individual knowledge bases.

During the course of the project, the JDP trained a total of 3,137 court clerks. The annual breakdown of clerk training is as follows:

Year	Clerks Trained
2000	24
2001	318
2002	682
2003	995
2004	1118

As noted previously, a complete list of all training programs conducted by the JDP, including subject matter, target audience, dates, number of participants and faculty, is attached as Annex A.

A key JDP local partner in the development and implementation of court staff training was the National Association of Court Clerks, which became an effective and energetic proponent of court clerk professionalism during the life of the JDP. Its activities are described in more detail in Section 2.5 below.

In addition to providing the substantive training described above, the JDP conducted extensive computer and automation training for court staff. Most of this training was targeted at staff at the Model Courts and Courts in Partnership and focused on basic computer skills and the electronic Case Management System (CMS). Initial JDP training offerings were conducted by a local company or by the JDP staff, but in the interest of sustainability the JDP switched to court employee trainers beginning in 2003. The JDP developed a comprehensive CMS user guide and training manual to facilitate the training process.

B. Court Administration

2.1. Model Courts and Courts In Partnership

The JDP Cooperative Agreement called for the creation of three to five Model Courts as a mechanism for introducing court administration reforms that eventually could be introduced to other courts around the country. The need for reforms in this area was widely acknowledged. In general, Bulgarian court facilities were not conducive to efficient operation and presented a poor image to the public. Work places were insufficiently automated and the existing file folder system was time consuming and very labor intensive. Court staff lacked professional training in management and administration, and no training was available to non-judicial staff. Inefficient work distribution led to frequent duplication of functions among clerks. Public access to the courts was inadequate, characterized by a lack of signage and other public information devices, and court staff generally lacked a public service ethos.

Following an extensive needs assessment, the JDP established Shumen District Court as the first Model Court in early 2000, and built upon the successes and lessons learned there to establish three additional MC's by the end of that year (Smolyan District and Regional Courts and Sofia District Court). To select the Model Courts, the JDP developed an evaluative criteria and applied it to score a representative number of courts. The criterion that was afforded the most weight was the chairperson's receptivity to reform and change. The chairpersons in Bulgaria set the tone for the court, and the success or failure of any enterprise involving a court depended in large part on that person. The JDP activities in all four of these courts during 2000 were organized in the following groups: 1) reorganization of the physical space, 2) implementation of a new case filing system, and 3) training of staff.

In 2001, EWMI decided to expand the reach of the Model Court initiative beyond the scope contemplated in the Cooperative Agreement, and established seven additional MCs: 1) Sofia Appellate Court; 2) Sofia Regional Court, Family Division; 3) Plovdiv

Appellate Court; 4) Blagoevgrad District Court; 5) Blagoevgrad Regional Court; 6) Gabrovo District Court; and 7) Gabrovo Regional Court. Along with the first four MCs, these courts received new computers and related equipment, extensive training in court management and computer applications, extensive remodeling of physical spaces in multiple venues to create "one-stop" service for the public, dramatically improving public access, convenience and court security, and initial testing of the Automated Case Management System (for details of relating to the development of CMS, see Section 2.7). The JDP also organized quarterly meetings of MC Chairpersons at which the latter presented evaluations of the on-going assistance to the MCs, shared problems and successes, and outlined future strategies.

With a cadre of Model Courts established, the JDP began to design a mechanism for rolling out the reforms achieved to additional courts. To that end, in 2002, the JDP began to lay the groundwork for the Courts in Partnership (CIP) program, by which it linked the Model Courts to other courts in a mentoring partnership. The process of nominating the prospective CIP courts included careful consideration of a multiplicity of factors including, but not limited to, geographic location of the court; the number of magistrates and non-judicial staff; workload and work processes; progressiveness of the managing judges; non-judicial staff receptivity and attitudes towards work and problem solving; openness to operational changes in court administration; level of automation; court facilities; computer literacy, and basic keyboarding skill of the staff; and the possibility for integration into the MC system. Vertical integration also was taken into account, with an eye to arranging working relationships between regional, district and appellate courts within the same regions.

The JDP selected ten CIPs, pairing them with nine of the MCs as follows:

Model Court		Court in Partnership
Smolyan Regional Court	→	Chepelare Regional Court
Smolyan District Court	→	Kurdzhali District Court
Sofia Regional Court, Family Division	→	Sofia Regional Court -- Criminal Division
Sofia District Court	→	Vratsa District Court
Blagoevgrad Regional Court	→	Gotse Delchev Regional Court
Blagoevgrad District Court	→	Kyustendil District Court
Shumen District Court	→	Shumen Regional Court
Gabrovo Regional Court	→	Sevlievo Regional Court
Sofia Appellate Court	→	Montana District Court
Gabrovo District Court	→	Veliko Turnovo District Court
Plovdiv Appellate Court	→	None

USAID approved the CIP program in June 2003, and by the end of that year the JDP had begun work with all the CIPs, expanding the reach of the JDP's model court program to 21 courts. The CIP process marked a significant shift of development methodology. With the Model Courts the work was donor initiated, planned and implemented. Work with the CIPs was donor initiated, Bulgarian court planned (with JDP assistance), and jointly implemented by different combinations of Model Courts, CIPs, and JDP work. Some of the work was done solely by the courts without JDP assistance. This methodology built better sustainability and greater Bulgarian "ownership" of the process of improvement and of the improvements themselves.

One of the most successful innovations introduced in the Model Courts was a new manual filing system, including uniform, color-coded file folders and a new sequential file numbering system. As a result of this success, the Ministry of Justice decided to rollout the new system throughout the country. By the end of 2002, the system was installed in all 153 Bulgarian courts with JDP assistance. The JDP also provided staff training and follow up monitoring to insure the system was being used properly.

Another key innovation introduced by the JDP in the Model Courts was the desk manual for court staff on selected topics. The JDP produced four such manuals: Summons, Civil Intake, Criminal, and New Employee Orientation. Each guide included specific “how to” information, a glossary of terms, an overview of local and national judicial structure, required forms, the clerks’ code of ethics, job description, and identification of best business practices. Forms that were produced by CMS were clearly identifiable. Each guide focused on customer relations with both external and internal court customers. Both clerks and judges were asked to review the guide for applicability, relevance, appropriateness of language and format, and user friendliness. The manuals were then converted into training modules and, as discussed in section 1.5, above, training was delivered to Model Courts and CIPs.

The demand for training for summons clerks made that manual the first priority. The summons guide was reviewed repeatedly by the JDP for accuracy, inclusiveness, and applicability to the role of the summons clerk. The comments and responses received were very positive and only minor changes or additions were suggested in the summons guide. Each hard copy of the guide included a CD ROM for easy duplication and future changes. The summons guide was distributed nationally in 2003 to all district, regional, appellate and military courts in Bulgaria, with copies provided to the Supreme Administrative Court and the Supreme Court of Cassation. The JDP applied a similar level of intensive review to the other three desk guides.

Improved public access was another priority within the MC/CIP program. In many of the courts the JDP designed and installed new signs and public information boards that provided customers with basic information such as locating and completing forms. The JDP also helped the courts produce brochures explaining the operations of the court, how to seek assistance, and how to file a case. Many courts also rearranged their operational hours, particularly clerk lunch schedules, so that intake offices would be open for the public during the entire working day.

The JDP also helped the MC/CIPs rationalize and systematize staff functions and staff hiring. The JDP drafted job descriptions for all court clerk positions that included the requirements for court employees. The MC/CIPs began using these descriptions in staff recruiting and hiring. The descriptions helped provide clarity of functions and contributed to the transparency of the hiring process.

As one of the purposes of the MC/CIP program was to provide benchmarks against which to test, evaluate and refine the activities leading to improved administration of justice in the courts, the JDP developed standards of court performance that encompass the fundamental purposes and responsibilities of courts. The standards included the following six performance areas: 1) Access to justice; 2) Expedition and

timeliness; 3) Equality, fairness and integrity; 4) Independence and accountability; 5) Continuing improvement; and 6) Public trust and confidence. Details about the performance improvements achieved by each of the MC/CIPs can be found in the Briefing Books that all but three of the MC/CIPs have completed (or nearly completed).²

In a related effort, the JDP also developed Court Improvement Plans to improve each MC/CIP's transparency, openness, accountability and fairness. The Court Improvement Plans provided to the courts contained information on how to achieve specific standards of improvement in court processes and services. With the approval and backing of the Supreme Judicial Council, the template Court Improvement Plan was distributed to all courts in Bulgaria. The Court Improvement Plan serves as the foundation for an Operation Review Template that allows the courts to evaluate their overall operational effectiveness and efficiency. The template will be evaluated and tested under the JSI project. It will allow each court will be able to evaluate a particular process or service and determine the "best methodology" in providing such specific processes or services.

2.2 Case Delay Reduction

Case delay has been a particularly vexing problem in the Bulgarian judiciary and was a focus of attention for the JDP throughout the life of the project. The JDP first initiated relevant data collection within the four original MCs, gathering time-to-disposition data for closed cases plus pending caseload data. The result was a comprehensive report analyzing case flow in the system. Case delay reduction issues were extensively discussed with both chairpersons and judges from the MCs. The initial groundwork for case delay reduction was laid and the need for national time standards was widely understood, although not widely accepted. In 2002, MC chairpersons identified case management and case delay reduction as an area within their top three concerns in court management.

In response to this consensus, in 2003 the JDP launched a four-phase effort to develop and implement programs to reduce delay in court cases. A Phase One education and planning conference for judges occurred in the second quarter of that year. Phase Two was a study tour in the U.S. for ten judges. Phase Three involved the education of a larger group of judges, court staff, and attorneys and included the launch of working groups to tackle different areas of the causes of delay and potential solutions. Phase Four, a national conference entitled *The Need for Reform of the Civil Procedure Code and Case Delay Reduction in Bulgaria*, took place in June 2004.

One of the working groups was the Summons Subcommittee. Chaired by an attorney who was motivated by one of the Phase Three seminars, the Summons Subcommittee provided training for mayors and municipalities, which are responsible for serving summonses and court notices. The trainings were well-received by the municipal officials, and mayors expressed a desire that the trainings be conducted annually. As a result of the training, a significant improvement was observed in the service of summonses and notices by participating municipalities. Two judges from the subcommittee reported that summonses in two municipalities were subsequently

² Copies of the MC/CIP Briefing Books are available from EWMI.

completed in accordance with legislative requirements and that following the training there have not been any postponed cases because of irregular summoning by the mayors of the two municipalities.

The second working group, the Time Standards Subcommittee, was chaired by the Chairperson of the Smolyan District Court. As a result of the discussions and research of the group, the Smolyan District Court implemented a pilot program to implement time standards that were drafted by the subcommittee. The Smolyan District Court Chairperson shared this information with other judges and implemented a tracking mechanism to monitor compliance with the suggested standards.

The Phase Four national conference, covered by five television stations and nine newspapers, raised awareness at the national level of the continuing need for civil procedure reform and case delay reduction. The 94 conference attendees included representatives of Parliament, the Constitutional Court and both Supreme Courts, Supreme Judicial Council, Supreme Bar Council, European Delegation Commission, and other key stakeholders. The chair of each JDP subcommittee presented findings, conclusions and recommendations for both rule and non-rule related changes to reduce case delay. The JDP provided a single comprehensive report, entitled *Case Delay Reduction Initiatives in Bulgaria, Summaries and Committee Reports*, to all conference participants. The report included a brief history of the case delay initiative, a definition of “delay,” identification of problems caused by delay and benefits of reducing delay, general principles of delay reduction, a policy regarding postponements, and an “ideal” case track procedure. A significant portion of the report presented the findings, conclusions and ideas that resulted from the work and research of the subcommittees. Each annex included identification of both operational and statutory or rule changes. Reports included the good practices of courts where appropriate. Both the Ministry of Justice and the Austrian Phare Project working on Civil Procedure Code revisions indicated they considered the report to be an excellent resource.

2.3 Strengthening the Supreme Judicial Council’s Capacity

Established in the 1991 Bulgarian Constitution, the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) has the authority to administer the number, appointment and retention of judges and to prepare, execute and control the judicial budget. The Council is also vested with broad statutory authority to administer the organization of the judicial system. The SJC was impeded by a lack of administrative capacity, inadequate resources, and a deliberative structure that prevented it from adequately addressing its workload. Strengthening the SJC’s capacity was therefore an important aim of the JDP.

In 2001, the JDP conducted extensive research on the legal and operational framework of the SJC and national and local court administration services under its auspices. The results of this research were presented in the assessment report, *Policy Analysis: National Court Administration in Bulgaria*. The report identified statutory barriers that inhibited the ability of the Council to effectively administer the judiciary in Bulgaria and at the same time provided the decision makers with policy guidelines that would lead to improved independence, funding and administration of the judicial system. Specifically, the report made the following recommendations: 1) amend the statute to provide more autonomy for the judicial budget; 2) consolidate and expand

responsibility for administrative functions in the SJC; 3) modify the administrative structure and improve the efficiency of deliberating processes of the SJC; and 4) increase funds to support the administration needed for courts to operate in a truly independent and effective manner.

The report was distributed to the SJC members, all high-ranking staff at the Ministry of Justice and other important stakeholders. The report influenced relevant aspects of Bulgaria's Judicial Reform Strategy and the Action Plan for its implementation and helped open a discussion on what Bulgaria needed to do to improve the independent and effective administration of the judicial system. The JDP helped draft amendments to the Judicial System Act introduced late in 2001 that included broadening the powers of the SJC (see Section 2.4).

In 2002, the JDP continued to work with SJC members for the purpose of addressing institutional development issues and mechanisms for improving all aspects of the Council's operations. In September 2002, 10 members of the SJC participated in a World Learning Study Tour. The 16 day tour, conducted primarily on the East Coast, included federal courts in Pennsylvania and Williamsburg, Virginia. The goals of the tour included examination of both local court administration structure and national court administration structure.

After a brief hiatus of activity resulting from the Constitutional Court challenge to the Judicial System Act amendments, in 2003 the JDP worked with an ad hoc committee of the SJC to revise the SJC's operational structure and internal rules. With JDP technical assistance the SJC adopted new operating rules, and at the end of the third quarter of that year began operating with defined committees and areas of responsibility. A new Council was elected in December 2003 and the JDP helped to organize and supported a well received mid-December transitional orientation conference for the new SJC.

In 2004, the SJC completed the chairperson appointment process for the courts and appointed a six-person Commission for Research and Technology to review information technology issues and develop a plan for producing a *SJC Annual Report* in 2005. The chair of the SJC Commission on Court Administration met with JDP staff on a regular basis and discussed a series of potential collaborations with the JSI project. The SJC also provided assistance in the planning and staffing of the first National Judicial Conference sponsored by USAID and EWMI.

The JDP also assisted the SJC to begin to address its new legislative mandate to collect and report caseload statistics. The current MOJ-directed system of collecting and compiling summary caseload statistics on the activities of the courts is seriously flawed and has little utility. In late 2004, the JDP provided the SJC with an analysis of the current statistical reporting system. The report contains recommendations on revising the system and offers EWMI JSI expertise and assistance in working with the SJC to develop a better one. The SJC established a special commission to address issues and procedures associated with statistics reporting.

2.4 Legislative/ Regulatory Drafting Assistance

Legislative and regulatory reform was a key component of the JDP's work throughout the life of the project. Within the legislative framework, the Judicial System Act (JSA) is the preeminent statutory instrument in Bulgaria governing magistrates (judges, prosecutors and investigators) and the courts. Among other things, it delineates the structure of the overall system, including the Supreme Judicial Council, establishes various rights and obligations of magistrates, regulates their appointment, promotion, training and other particulars of their status, and sets forth mechanisms for the administration of the courts.

From the earliest days of the project, the JDP advocated revisions to the JSA in order to strengthen and clarify it in a variety of ways. During the summer of 2000, the JDP COP agreed to serve as a technical advisor to a Ministry of Justice sponsored drafting group to revise the Act. For the remainder of that year and throughout 2001, the JDP provided extensive technical assistance to the working group. The working group consisted of members of the Supreme Judicial Council and the Ministry of Justice. As a permanent member in the meetings of the group, the JDP succeeded in providing valuable assistance based on its experience and research conducted in Bulgarian and foreign legislation. The draft amendments addressed the selection procedures for appointment of magistrates; evaluation of their work; increase of their professional qualifications through compulsory initial and continuing training in a public institution (National Institute of Justice), and other issues.

The JSA amendments were passed into law in July 2002. Although the final form of the amendments adopted by Parliament differed in many respects from the work of the drafting group, a number of important provisions advocated by the JDP remained in the final version. In the Fall of 2002, a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the amendments to the JSA was filed in the Constitutional Court by the plenum of the Supreme Court of Cassation. The suit alleged that the amendments violated the independence of the judicial system and the separation of powers, and created new powers that were unconstitutional. The Constitutional Court ruled some aspects of the amendments unconstitutional, but upheld almost all of the significant reform elements. In particular, the Court determined that the creation of the National Institute of Justice was permissible, although not under the control of the Ministry of Justice; permitted the SJC to endorse the rules of ethics adopted by professional organizations of judges, prosecutors, and investigators; and required a competitive process for appointment of junior judges, junior prosecutors, and regional court judges.

The JDP also played a key role in drafting and championing amendments to the *Statute for the organization of the court administration and the functions of the offices in regional, district, martial and appellate courts and the status of court employees*, commonly referred to as Regulation 28 of the Ministry of Justice. This is the principal regulation governing the operation of Bulgarian courts. The JDP participated in a MOJ-sponsored drafting group that also included, at the JDP's suggestion, chairpersons of the MCs, thus introducing a logical framework between the actual implementation of new court administration practice and the regulations that governed that practice. The JDP also won a seat at the table for representatives of the National

Association of Court Clerks, marking the first time clerks had a voice in determining the rules that govern the operations of the courts in which they work.

The new draft regulation produced by the group in 2002 incorporated a number of best practices developed from the JDP's experience with the Model Courts. Among other innovations, the draft regulation established the position of a court administrator for the first time. Attachments to the draft were also prepared based on the work done by the JDP in implementing a new filing system, introducing sample job descriptions for non-judicial staff, and improving the forms used by courts. Unfortunately, as a result of the constitutional lawsuit, funding concerns, and other factors, the MOJ delayed promulgation of the new Regulation 28 for almost two years. Finally, in October 2004, the long awaited regulation was officially promulgated and became effective the following month.

In addition to its engagement with key legislation and regulations, the JDP provided considerable policy guidance to the MOJ on judicial reform matters. During the summer of 2001, the JDP worked with its Bulgarian counterparts to prepare a comprehensive working document on how best to reform the judiciary and ensure compliance with EU accession. The JDP's work in this area formed the basis for the development of the National Strategy for Reform of the Judiciary, which was adopted by the Bulgarian government. The Strategy complied with the requirements and priorities set forth in the National Program for Adoption of the Acquis, and its objectives included the following: 1) To adhere to the principles of a legally constituted state and the confirmation of the supremacy of the law; 2) To improve the administrative activity of the judiciary; 3) To institutionalize professional training through creating a National Judicial Institute and strengthen the qualification of magistrates and non-judicial staff; 4) To stabilize the capacity of the SJC and improve its co-ordination with the MOJ; 5) To introduce and utilize information technologies in the operations of the judiciary; 6) To improve court infrastructure and security; 7) To improve execution of judgments procedures; 8) To introduce alternative dispute resolution and improve free legal aid provisions; 9) To create public outreach programs to improve the public image of the judiciary and increase transparency; 10) To create an adequate and responsible judicial budget and 11) To review and amend the legislative framework governing the judicial system in order to improve its overall functioning.

The Ministry of Justice also solicited the JDP's assistance in developing an Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy. The development of such an Action Plan was called for in the regular report on Bulgaria's progress towards accession in the European Union in order to achieve the objectives set forth in the Judicial Reform Strategy. The JDP helped organize and write the Action Plan. The document provided a clearly determined set of actions, timeframes and a listing of the responsible state entities required to achieve each of the Plan's objectives. The final document was approved by the Ministry of Justice and presented for discussion to various judicial representatives. The Action Plan served as the principle tool for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy's objectives.

Finally, in the penultimate year of the project, the JDP played a key role in fostering important changes in the Bulgarian Constitution. The JDP and USAID worked with the Ministry of Justice and the Venice Commission to assist the MOJ and the

Bulgarian Parliament with efforts to amend constitutional sections affecting the judiciary. The JDP provided consultant expert assistance to the Venice Commission and Parliament, and coordinated work with the Open Society Foundation and the MOJ to plan and host a national conference to publicize and obtain input on the proposed amendments from key stakeholders. Presentations by the President of Bulgaria, the Minister of Justice, the U. S. Ambassador, and leaders of Parliament laid the groundwork for further conference discussions with law professors, judges, critics of the amendments, and interested NGOs. In the fall of 2003, the Bulgarian National Assembly unanimously passed the constitutional amendments. Those amendments were the first changes to the Bulgarian Constitution since its adoption in 1991. The amendments effected beneficial changes in judicial immunity, tenure, judicial evaluation, the ability to request and the grounds for divestiture of immunity, and in terms of office for the administrative managers of the judiciary.

2.5 National Association of Court Clerks

The JDP helped establish the National Association of Court Clerks in 2001 and supported it from its inception. The purpose of this effort was to give voice to the thousands of non-judicial workers employed in the judicial system and to foster a common sense of commitment and professionalism within their ranks. Given the important role of court clerks within the judiciary, mobilizing them as agents of change in support of reform was an important element of the JDP strategy.

In 2001, the JDP conducted a nationwide needs assessment with the assistance of the NACC, which resulted in responses from over 600 clerks. The results of the survey were distributed to the Association's regional representatives, who in turn distributed them to all local clerks. The survey represented the first time in the history of the Bulgarian court system that the clerks and administrative staff had been polled to determine their training and educational needs. This activity alone generated great enthusiasm and interest between the JDP and the Association. As a result of the survey, the JDP developed a list of priority training courses (Streamlining Work Procedures, Customer Service, and Communication Skills) that were subsequently delivered.

The JDP also worked with the NACC's four committees in developing the Association's Strategic Plan and helped it carry out an ambitious first year agenda. In addition to the above activities, the NACC participated in the MOJ's Committee to redraft Regulation 28, which governs administrative functions within the court system; provided feedback to the JDP on the newly designed job descriptions; prepared Customer Service Standards; and began work on a Code of Conduct for Administrative Personnel. The Association also secured office space and hired a part time secretary. Finally, the JDP helped the NACC convene its first General Assembly meeting in November 2001, which was attended by over 200 clerks from around the country and addressed by the Deputy Minister of Justice.

With JDP assistance, the NACC experienced continued growth and development in 2002, expanding its membership from 847 court clerks organized into 33 regional units (as of November 2001) to 1,481 court clerks organized in 59 regional units (as of November 2002). This remarkable growth indicated that the Association was meeting the needs of the court clerks through its training efforts, involvement with

various committees and task forces that represented the interests of the non-judicial staff, and through participation in developing manuals and other relevant documents to assist the court clerks in their work. The Association also established effective working relationships with key judicial and Ministry of Justice leadership. This rapport opened doors to the Association to provide advice and information, and to lobby for changes, particularly in the area of salary and professional status.

The NACC continued its aggressive pace of activities in 2002. It finalized and adopted a set of Customer Service Standards, posters of which were produced by the JDP and distributed to all courts, and developed and adopted a Code of Conduct for non-judicial employees (which was approved by the MOJ). Along with representatives of the MCs and JDP staff, the NACC drafted a much needed New Clerks Orientation Manual. The Association also continued its participation in the Regulation 28 drafting committee, representing a critical view not before offered in any drafting group. In particular, NACC members assisted in the drafting of new job descriptions that were attached to Regulation 28. The Association also increased its training capacity, delivering training in 6 different topics across the country that reached 374 clerks and 6 judges. It also developed and delivered a National Training Conference attended by over 150 participants, in which three different training topics were conducted simultaneously (Team Building, Code of Conduct/Regulation 28, and Grammar for Court Secretaries).

The Association wrote and was awarded a \$12,000 grant from the Open Society Foundation to deliver training across the country (at Model Court sites) on the Code of Conduct and how to fight corruption in the administrative functions of the courts. This grant reflected the Association's growing reputation for delivering quality programs, its organizational capacity, and its dedication to improving the system.

In 2003, the NACC conducted another successful National Court Clerks Training Conference. 87 different courts were represented in the participants who attended the conference. The training included Training for Trainers for New Clerk Orientation, Time Management and Stress Reduction, Remedial Grammar, and Summons Clerks Training. All programs were organized and delivered by court clerk trainers. The NACC took responsibility for the logistical support and printing of all materials, indicating a growing self-reliance.

To strengthen the institutional capacity of the NACC, the JDP conducted training of the Association's board in 2004. The program focused on communications and decision-making within the board itself and externally to the membership. The board examined different methods of improving its relationships and how to complement those skills into a more productively run and operated board. Finally, at the end of 2004, the NACC played a key supporting role during the National Judicial Conference.

2.6 Union of Judges in Bulgaria

In 2003, USAID transferred responsibility for supporting the Union of Judges in Bulgaria from ABA/CEELI to the JDP. The JDP began actual work with the UJB late in 2003 by assisting with the organization, program, logistics, and funding for the

UJB's annual meeting. At the meeting the Union members adopted a code of ethics for judges and elected a new Executive Managing Board.

The JDP provided assistance to the UJB on a range of activities in 2004. The JDP completed development of a web-based tool to enter survey information for a nationwide survey of judges in Bulgaria. The UJB had sent out opinion surveys on the characteristics of an ideal court chairperson and over 1,000 responses were received. In order to tabulate that data quickly and accurately and to assist with future surveys, the JDP researched and analyzed software tools for this purpose. The JDP also helped improve the membership database of the Union. By the end of the year, all judicial members of the Union had been entered into this database. The JDP also worked with the UJB to develop content for its website.

The UJB was awarded a grant from the EWMI grants program (see Section 2.12 below). The grant project, Trial Simulation for Schools, was directed towards educating school children about the judicial profession. The UJB conducted five trial simulations in schools in Sofia, Vidin, Varna, Chepelare and Blagoevgrad. The UJB also actively participated in the organization of the first National Judicial Conference. The UJB chairperson and another member of its managing board served as moderators of two conference sessions.

2.7 Electronic Case Management System

In tandem with its efforts to provide automation equipment and training to the MCs (and subsequently the CIPs), the JDP developed and refined a high quality electronic case management system during the course of the project. From the beginning of this effort, the JDP strove to insure maximum local ownership of the software development. Bulgarian judicial officials provided overall guidance on the necessary content and a Bulgarian firm designed the actual software. The JDP began by conducting a detailed review of the manual processing stages of both civil and criminal cases. This was done manually in the courts using actual case files. The preparation work for the CMS was conducted under the auspices of the IT Committee of the SJC, which created a sub-committee for this purpose headed by Judge Ignat Kolchev from the Smolyan Regional Court (a MC).

The JDP developed initial technical standards for the software and created working groups of judges and administrative staff to develop technical specifications in compliance with Bulgaria's court practice and to rewrite relevant court regulations. The JDP issued a solicitation for the development of the software and reviewed the bids along with the SJC IT Committee. The SJC, with JDP assistance, selected Latona Development and the IBM/Lotus platform for the system. The product was developed, deployed and tested, first in Smolyan and then in other Model Courts. The CMS was based on a world standard automation platform and designed to provide a comprehensive tool to track and manage all cases at all levels of Bulgaria's judicial system, with flexibility for ready modification.

The JDP took steps to insure the long-term viability of the CMS and the feasibility of its rollout on a nationwide basis. EWMI granted an irrevocable license to the SJC to use and modify the software. EWMI was not in a position to donate all of the underlying server and user licenses necessary to implement the system, as the entire

system would comprise approximately 8,000 users in over 200 locations and would need to be phased in over time. To address this challenge, the JDP facilitated a meeting in London with top officials of IBM/Lotus, the MOJ and the SJC that resulted in an unprecedented offer by IBM/Lotus to donate one server and/or user license for every license purchased over a five-year period (with a maximum of 4,000 donated user licenses and 50 donated server licenses). This agreement represented a significant leveraging of USAID resources through a public-private partnership.

By 2002, the JDP completed the CMS system template at the Regional, District, Appellate, and Supreme Court levels, ending the initial development phase of the system. The JDP conducted extensive training of clerks and judges in the MCs, and developed a cadre of local CMS trainers in the courts. The JDP also drafted a comprehensive user guide and training manual and established a Help Desk service for courts using the CMS.

For much of 2003, the JDP developed CMS software enhancements. A major addition was the creation of internet-based access to a court's CMS. This permitted remote user access to court files and case information and permits electronic transfer of case files between different court locations. After completion of the enhancements, the JDP organized and conducted a CMS users conference in September 2003 to demonstrate the system and educate future CMS users. A by-product of that conference included a radio broadcast of information about the CMS to a live audience of three million people in Bulgaria.

In connection with its CMS development and court automation efforts, the JDP undertook a number of initiatives over the course of the project to insure the sustainability of project achievements. For example, in 2003, the JDP created an electronic Message Board for court staff using the CMS. While court clerks initially were reluctant to use it to share ideas and resolve problems, by the following year the Message Board had 34 members, including court System Administrators and staff from the SJC, the Bulgarian Academy of Science, Latona Development, and the JDP. The JDP also created a local CMS Development Committee to oversee future refinements to the system. The Committee was comprised primarily of Systems Administrators and expanded its membership and expertise as the CMS was introduced into additional courts.

As a result of the financial and technical assistance provided by the JDP, Bulgaria now owns software rights in an electronic case management system that was designed for Bulgarian courts by Bulgarian experts, was tested by Bulgarian courts, has been enhanced by Bulgarian court system administrators, is being used in Bulgarian courts, and is among the most powerful court case management systems in the world.

By the end of the JDP, the CMS was being used in 17 courts. Further expansion of the CMS will be dependent upon mutual cooperation of the SJC, MOJ, JDP, but more importantly, the European Union. A 2004 EU tender for court automation assistance raised the troubling prospect that an entirely new electronic case management system would be introduced into the Bulgarian courts. While the SJC had formally endorsed the JDP CMS as the exclusive system for the courts, it was not willing or able to affect or redirect the EU tender. As a result, as the JDP drew to a close, the future direction of automated case management in the courts remained uncertain.

2.8 Court Websites and Web Portal

The JDP developed a standard template for Bulgarian court websites in 2003, and by the end of 2004, all MCs and CIPs except Kyustendil District Court either had a website or were part of the same website as the district court in the same building. The JDP trained court staff to maintain the sites. The more comprehensive websites provide current information on events occurring in the court, the court structure, weekly calendars, lists of attorneys and notaries and recent judgments enforced. The SJC System Administrators agreed to take over maintaining the web server and began working with courts outside the MC/CIP program to build and maintain websites. The following are the MC/CIPs that have websites and their corresponding addresses:

Model Court	Website
Blagoevgrad DC	http://blagoevgrad.court-bg.org/
Blagoevgrad RC	http://blagoevgrad.court-bg.org/
Gabrovo DC	http://www.court-gbr.com/
Gabrovo RC	http://www.court-gbr.com/
Plovdiv AC	http://www.apelsad-pd.bg/
Shoumen DC	http://www.court-sh.org/
Smolyan DC	http://smolyan.court-bg.org
Smolyan RC	http://smolyan.court-bg.org
Sofia AC	http://sofiaac.court-bg.org/
Sofia DC	http://sofiadc.court-bg.org
Sofia FD RC	http://sofiarc.court-bg.org/

Court in Partnership	Website
Chepelare RC	http://chepelare.court-bg.org/
Gotse Delchev RC	http://gotsedelchev.court-bg.org/
Kurdzhali DC	http://kardjali.court-bg.org/
Montana DC	http://montana.court-bg.org
Sevlievo RC	http://sevlievo.court-bg.org/
Shoumen RC	http://shumenrs.court-bg.org/
Sofia CD RC	http://sofiarc.court-bg.org/
Veliko Tarnovo DC	http://vt.court-bg.org/
Vratsa DC	http://vratza.court-bg.org/

The JDP also convened an SJC expert working group in 2003 to develop a national court web portal for court and other judicial system websites. The purpose of this effort was to increase transparency, public information, and public confidence in the judicial system. The JDP and SJC completed the portal in 2004. It included a citizens' page, the content of which was taken from the *Citizen's Guide to the Bulgarian Judiciary* brochure developed by the JDP. The JDP also developed a page geared towards court employees, giving them the ability to access guides produced by JDP and SJC, including guides for intake clerks (civil, criminal), and the guide for summons processing. This allowed the SJC and the courts to realize savings in production and distribution costs. The JDP also provided training to the technical staff of the SJC in how to maintain the portal.

2.9 Verbatim Court Hearing Records

Verbatim records of court hearings do not exist in Bulgaria. Court protocols are made by the court secretary and judge from summary notes taken at the hearing and subsequent work afterwards. A verbatim transcript of the court proceeding would promote greater transparency and openness in the courts. If disagreements with the protocols could be resolved faster and accurately through a verbatim transcript and/or an audio record of the hearing, the number of appeals might be reduced.

In 2003, the JDP began to explore the possibility of a pilot verbatim court recording initiative and researched various technical options and equipment suppliers to evaluate costs and availability of technology. The JDP identified and tested a computer driven software alternative to audio recording for verbatim transcription. This lower cost alternative employed a computer sound card with microphones and special recording software to track and log the hearing. In 2004, the JDP implemented verbatim recording equipment in the Montana District Court and Shumen District Court. The JDP staff trained the court secretaries in the use and operation of the equipment. The chairpersons of the courts immediately scheduled cases to be recorded on a trial basis so that judges and staff could critique themselves in utilizing the equipment. JDP staff participated in this review of the test cases and was impressed by the enthusiasm displayed by the judges and court staff.

Also in 2004, the Union of Jurists (UJB) was approved by USAID and the JDP grant program to review the various methods of recording court hearings to produce accurate and accountable court protocols. UJB staff visited the Shumen District Court to observe and interview judges and staff about their experiences in using the verbatim recording system provided by the JDP. The UJB staff met with the JDP staff to discuss their impressions from their Shumen visit. The UJB staff stated the verbatim recording system in Shumen was an effective system that improved the quality and accuracy of court protocols.

The JDP staff conducted a preliminary assessment of the two court sites (Shumen and Montana District Courts) pilot verbatim systems in November 2004. Overall, the verbatim experience in the two pilot courts has been a positive one for the courts, the attorneys and the litigants. Although the pilot courts are not producing a “true verbatim record” of the court hearing, there are definite improvements in the openness and transparency in these two courts, in addition to the more accurate protocols. There are legal and procedural impediments in the civil, criminal and appellate codes that need to be amended or repealed to implement a “true verbatim system.” Current legal requirements require that the reporting judge dictate the protocol and that a protocol be produced for each hearing. The time and resources required to produce a verbatim protocol for each hearing would be impractical and costly for the Bulgarian courts.

2.10 Public Access to Court Records

In an effort to foster greater transparency and public accountability in the judicial system, the JDP launched an initiative to improve public access to court records in 2003. The JDP conducted research on international and European Union standards on access to court records and identified Bulgarian statutory and regulatory prohibitions

limiting access to court records. In an effort to gather a variety of viewpoints on the issue, the JDP conducted telephone and in-person interviews with judges, court staff, attorneys, journalists, and representatives of the Rule of Law Institute, the Open Society Foundation, and the Bulgarian Lawyers for Human Right Foundation. Subsequently, the JDP conducted two separate focus groups with participation by invited judges, court public relations staff, heads of Bulgarian NGO's, attorneys, and media representatives. The purpose of the focus groups was to gather information and begin a dialogue on public access to court records and the resulting transparency of the court system. The practice of restricting access to records appeared to be based on the perceived right to privacy of parties to a case, and the protection of classified information.

The JDP convened a working group that began writing an initial draft public access policy based on the results of the research and the focus groups. The working group met several times in 2004 and continued research and discussion on the following topics: 1) what specific Acts prevent access; 2) who legally has access to court records and information; 3) what types of court records are excluded from access; 4) what kind of information needs to be accessible to the bar and public; and 5) the definition of what is “Accessible and Available.”

At the end of 2004, the working group began development of a Survey Questionnaire that will be distributed to judges, attorneys, court clerks and journalists to solicit information and suggestions on how to make the courts more open and accessible. The problems associated with access to court information and decisions by the public, attorneys and journalists will also be addressed in the Survey Questionnaire.

2.11 Regional Criminal Justice Initiative

In the final year of the JDP, the project coordinated closely with the US Department of Justice’s Regional Criminal Justice Initiative (RCJI) in Bulgaria. That effort targeted US DOJ assistance to prosecutors’ offices in Blagoevgrad to improve handling of criminal cases by employing increasingly optimum procedures, relationships, and functioning of police, investigators, and prosecutors. The JDP met with Blagoevgrad court and prosecution staff from both regional and district offices and completed a user needs assessment.

The initial request from the prosecutors was to give “view access” to cases using the CMS. In order to get better cooperation from the prosecution office, and make the work of the court intake clerks easier, the JDP convinced the System Administrators of the court to create new prosecutor office user types. The JDP then completed software and system modifications and installed them in the court, and trained prosecutors and clerks from the regional prosecutors’ office. The JDP also incorporated electronic filing by prosecution clerks into the system, and allowed for query access by prosecutors to the conviction certificate database.

Providing read-only access to prosecutors benefited both the court and the prosecutors. It saved time for court clerks, because prosecutors could query the CMS for information they needed without help from court clerks. The prosecutors benefited because they could search for information on criminal and certain civil cases faster, and at any time of day, even when the court itself was closed.

2.12 Grant Program

The JDP launched a small grant program in 2004 to stimulate the engagement of NGOs in judicial reform activities and further the reach of the JDP's activities. 57 NGOs applied for grants. After a thorough evaluation, 16 organizations were selected for awards. The grant projects were all completed within four months. The total amount of grant funds disbursed was \$149,151.

The 16 grantees were as follows:

1. Access-Sofia, Sofia
2. Dike Association, Sofia
3. Gender Education, Research and Technologies (GERT), Sofia
4. Media with Human Faces, Plovdiv
5. National Association of Court Clerks (NACC), Sofia
6. NGO Links, Sofia
7. Open Society Club – Gabrovo
8. Open Society Club – Sliven
9. Open Society Club – Stara Zagora
10. Program and Analytical Center for European Law (PACEL), Sofia
11. Radio New Europe, Sofia
12. Romani Baht, Sofia
13. Social Fund – Chepelare
14. Transparency without Borders, Sofia
15. Union of Judges in Bulgaria, Sofia
16. Union of Jurists, Sofia

The grant program proved to be very successful, and reflected the creativity and maturity of Bulgarian NGOs. Among the major accomplishments of the program were the following:

- An Association of Sofia Regional Court jurors was established and registered;
- Over 60 Sofia Regional, District and City Courts jurors were trained;
- A Jurors' Ethic Code was drafted and accepted by the Jurors' Association;
- A Jurors' Guidebook was printed in 550 copies;
- Fifteen radio programs on the judicial system and reform in Bulgaria were broadcast on Radio New Europe;
- Two radio programs were broadcast on a local Sliven radio station on the essence of the judicial reform and on ADR;
- Three television programs were broadcast on Plovdiv Public Television that included a mock trial based on a real and widely discussed local case and a live call-in discussion;
- 24 news reports on lawsuits were broadcast within three months on Plovdiv Public Television;
- A media monitoring of the Bulgarian judicial system's public image was conducted;
- Information Centers were established in the Gabrovo Courthouse, Sevlievo Regional Court, Chepelare Regional Court and Stara Zagora Courthouse, and

Gabrovo Courthouse was equipped with an electronic information system displaying case information on three monitors placed in the courthouse;

- 24 court clerks from Stara Zagora Courthouse were trained in communication skills and computer literacy;
- A media strategy of Gabrovo District Court was designed;
- 28 trainings on the newly adopted Anti-discrimination Act were organized and implemented throughout the country, targeting both local Roma leaders and state institutions representatives;
- 20 representatives of the Roma, Turkish and Karakachan minorities were trained in communication skills, negotiation, mediation, human rights and basic legal knowledge;
- A jurist's handbook, *The Burden of Proof in Cases of Gender Discrimination in EU Legislation* was printed, distributed and recognized as unique in its genre in the Bulgarian legal community;
- Six trial simulations for school students were organized, implemented and publicized in five towns of the country;
- A study of public access to court practices in Bulgaria and in EU member states and the US was carried out and a publication, *Best Practices in Facilitating Public Access to Court*, was printed and widely distributed;
- Based on a sociological study research of four courts (including two MCs), and on an on-line survey, a report, *Introduction of Anti-corruption Policies and Practices in Bulgarian Courts*, was published;
- A study of court sessions recording methods was carried out and recommendations for legislative changes and feasible equipment elaborated (see Section 2.9 above);
- A survey of judicial reform implementation in the Stara Zagora Region and minorities' awareness of the reform was conducted and a final report was produced and presented to key local and national decision-makers;
- A study of the reasons for poor services of citizens by court clerks and of the queuing in front of clerks desks was implemented and a brochure informing court customers of court functioning and clerks' duties was designed and distributed; and
- The websites of Gabrovo District Court and Stara Zagora District Court were developed and a webpage of the newly established Jurors' Association was established.

IV. Post-USAID Activities

Section 1.5.2 of the Cooperative Agreement suggests that this report should include recommendations to the Bulgarians for how to continue specified activities without USAID assistance. With the award of the three-year Judicial Strengthening Initiative (JSI) contract to EWMI in September 2004, this issue has been temporarily postponed, as the JSI will provide the Bulgarians with key assistance in both key areas addressed by the JDP, judicial training and court administration, until 2007. The question of post-USAID activities will be directly addressed throughout the course of the JSI itself, particularly through the Fund for Justice component of the project. That component seeks to establish a mechanism for post-graduation assistance in the rule of law area through the potential use of the Global Development Alliance (GDA) model.

ANNEX A: JDP TRAINING OF JUDGES AND CLERKS, 2000 - 2004

YEAR: 2000											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
1	Court Administration Orientation	Court Unit Heads	2/2/2000	4/2/2000	2	68	0	0	68	136	Richard Martin, Vladislav Slavov, Kapka Kostova, Dushana Zdravkova, Ignat Kolchev
2	Court Administration Orientation	Shumen District Court	3/6/2000	3/6/2000	1	12	24	0	36	36	Virginia Leavitt, Michael Bayne, Richard Martin
Total 2000					3	80	24	0	104	172	

YEAR: 2001											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
1	Managing Transition and Court Administration Orientation	Sofia DC	23/02/01	23/02/01	1	23	30	0	53	53	Al Szal, Laurence Vetter, Virginia Leavitt
2	Managing Transition and Court Administration Orientation	Smolyan DC & RC	26/02/01	26/02/01	1	24	46	0	70	70	Al Szal, Laurence Vetter, Virginia Leavitt
3	Supervisory Training Basic Level	Sofia DC, Shumen DC, Smolyan DC and RC, NCCA	25/04/01	27/04/01	3	7	15	0	22	66	Svetla Dimova, MM, Tzvetan Davidkov, SU
4	Managing Transition and Court Administration Orientation	Plovdiv AC	5/6/2001	5/6/2001	1	19	10	0	29	29	Laurence Vetter, Mike Shepherd, Virginia Leavitt
5	Managing Transition and Court Administration Orientation	Sofia AC and Family Court	6/6/2001	6/6/2001	1	40	45	0	85	85	Laurence Vetter, Mike Shepherd, Virginia Leavitt
6	Managing Transition and Court Administration Orientation	Gabrovo R and DC	7/6/2001	7/6/2001	1	22	38	0	60	60	Laurence Vetter, Mike Shepherd, Virginia Leavitt

YEAR: 2001

	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
7	Managing Transition and Court Adm. Orientation	Blagoevgrad R and DC	8/6/2001	8/6/2001	1	25	46	0	71	71	Laurence Vetter, Mike Shepherd, Virginia Leavitt
8	Customer Service	Shumen DC, Sofia DC, Smolyan DC and RC	19/06/01	20/06/01	2	0	19	0	19	38	Debra Crosser, Liz Strong
9	Customer Service	Shumen DC, Sofia DC, Smolyan DC and RC	21/06/01	22/06/01	2	0	21	0	21	42	Debra Crosser, Liz Strong
10	Supervisory Training Basic Level	Gabrovo DC, Blagoevgrad DC, Sofia AC	27/06/01	29/06/01	3	5	10	0	15	45	Svetla Dimova, MM, Tzvetan Davidkov, SU
11	Supervisory Training Basic Level	Gabrovo RC, Blagoevgrad RC, Plovdiv AC, Family Court	4/7/2001	6/7/2001	3	5	10	0	15	45	Svetla Dimova, MM, Tzvetan Davidkov, SU
12	Supervisory Training Advanced Level	Shumen DC, Plovdiv AC, Gabrovo RC, Gabrovo DC	8/11/2001	9/11/2001	2	3	10	0	13	24	Svetla Dimova, MM, Tzvetan Davidkov, SU
13	Supervisory Training Advanced Level	Sofia DC, Sofia AC, Blagoevgrad DC, Blagoevgrad RC	15/11/01	16/11/01	2	3	12	0	15	30	Svetla Dimova, MM, Tzvetan Davidkov, SU
14	Supervisory Training Advanced Level	Smolyan DC, Smolyan RC, Family Court, NCCA	19/11/01	20/11/01	2	6	6	0	12	24	Tzvetan Davidkov, SU, Svetla Dimova, MM
Total 2001					25	182	318	0	500	684	

YEAR: 2002											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
1	Customer Service Training	Gabrovo DC and RC, Sofia AC, NCCA	1/8/02	1/9/02	2	1	16	0	17	34	Virginia Leavitt
2	Customer Service Training	Blagoevgrad RC and DC, Plovdiv AC	1/10/02	1/11/02	2	1	13	0	14	28	Virginia Leavitt
3	Training of Trainers Basic Level	Gabrovo DC and RC, Sofia AC & DC, Blagoevgrad RC and DC, Plovdiv AC, Smolyan DC & RC, Shumen DC, Russe DC & RC, Silistra DC & RC, Byala Stalina RC, Dupnitza RC	1/30/02	2/1/02	3	3	24	0	27	81	Tzvetan Davidkov, SU, Svetla Dimova, MM, Donka Gencheva, Judge in Sofia City C, Tzveta Marinova, Judge in Varna DC
4	Training of Trainers Advanced Level	Gabrovo DC and RC, Sofia AC & DC, Blagoevgrad RC and DC, Plovdiv AC, Smolyan DC & RC, Shumen DC, Russe DC & RC, Silistra DC & RC, Byala Stalina RC, Dupnitza RC	2/27/02	3/1/02	3	2	26	0	28	84	Donka Gencheva, Judge in Sofia City C, Tzveta Marinova, Judge in Varna DC
5	File Folders Training	Clerks from 56 courts from all over the country	3/15/02	3/15/02	1	0	68	0	68	68	18 clerk trainers from all Model Pilot Courts, Rousse RC & DC and Silistra RC & DC
6	Customer Service Training	Clerks members of the NCCA	3/21/02	3/22/02	2	0	40	0	40	80	Clerk trainers from the National Court Clerks' Association (NCCA), Roza Gueorgieva, Katya Gurneva, Evelina Gueraskova, Stanka Yanakieva

YEAR: 2002											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
7	Customer Service Training	Clerks members of the NCCA	18/04/02	19/04/02	2	0	37	0	37	74	Clerk trainers from the National Court Clerks' Association (NCCA), Roza Gueorgieva, Katya Gurneva, Evelina Gueraskova, Stanka Yanakieva
8	Customer Service Training	Clerks members of the NCCA	9/5/02	10/5/02	2	0	37	0	37	74	Clerk trainers from the National Court Clerks' Association (NCCA) , Roza Gueorgieva, Katya Gurneva, Evelina Gueraskova, Stanka Yanakieva
9	Code of Conduct for Judges and Clerks	Judges and clerks from 20 courts	6/5/02	6/6/02	2	19	32	0	51	102	Alexander Kashumov, Access to Information Foundation, Vladimir Traikov, TI, Dushana Zdravkova, Varna DC, Zoya Marinova, NCCA, Velislava Delcheva, JDP
10	Team Building Training	Clerks from 49 courts	20/06/02	21/06/02	2	2	65	0	67	134	Liz Strong, Bobi Griffin
11	Code of Conduct, New Regulation 28	Clerks from 49 courts	20/06/02	21/06/02	2	0	46	0	46	92	Velislava Delcheva, Zoya Marinova, Ignat Kolchev, Tanya Gocheva
12	Remedial Grammar Basic	Court Secretaries	20/06/02	21/06/02	2	0	33	0	33	66	Vassilka Stamatova, Anna Slivkova
13	Team Building for Court Chairpersons and Judges	Chairpersons and judges from 10 MPCs	7/2/02	7/2/02	1	25	0	0	25	25	Judge Kenneth Stuart, Colorado Virginia Leavitt, JDP
14	Current Accounting Practices	Chief accountants from all District Courts and District Investigation Offices	8/8/02	8/10/02	3	0	61	0	61	183	Alexandra Tzekova, MOJ, Ivan Zlatkov, DEC, I. Karanovski, National Social Security Institute, Petar Petrov, SJC, Yanko Yanchev, SJC
15	Remedial Grammar Advanced	Court Secretaries	9/23/02	9/24/02	2	0	26	0	26	52	Vassilka Stamatova, Anna Slivkova

YEAR: 2002											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
16	Team Building for Judicial Teams	Deputy chairpersons, judges and clerks from MPCs and NCCA (including 11 To-be-trainers)	9/25/02	9/27/02	3	6	28	0	34	102	Steli Peteva, UNDP Community Centers Project, Rumen Minkovski, Sofia University
17	Customer Service Training	Court Clerks	10/10/02	10/11/02	2	0	36	0	36	72	NCCA Members: Roza Gueorgieva, Katya Gurneva, Evelina Gueraskova, Stanka Yanakieva
18	Remedial Grammar	Court Secretaries	10/17/02	10/18/02	2	0	20	0	20	40	Vassilka Stamatova, Anna Slivkova
19	Training of Trainers	Clerks from 9 courts plus 2 clerks and 2 judges to-be-trainers	10/30/02	11/1/02	3	2	17	2	21	63	Donka Gencheva, Judge in Sofia City C, Tzveta Marinova, Judge in Varna DC
20	Stress Management	Court Secretaries	11/14/02	11/15/02	2	0	27	0	27	54	Vassilka Stamatova, Anna Slivkova
21	Team Building for Judicial Teams Advanced	Chairpersons, judges, and clerks from 10 MPCs (including 10 To-be-trainers)	11/21/02	11/22/02	2	5	24	0	29	58	Steli Peteva, UNDP Community Centers Project, Rumen Minkovski, Sofia University
22	Training of Trainers Advanced Level	Clerks from 9 courts plus 2 clerks and 2 judges to-be-trainers	12/11/02	12/13/02	3	2	6	2	10	30	Donka Gencheva, Judge in Sofia City C, Nikolai Enchev, Judge in Sofia RC, Roza Georgieva, Clerk in Sofia CC, Katia Gurneva, Clerk in Sofia RC
Total 2002					48	68	682	4	754	1596	

YEAR: 2003											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
1	Team Building Training	Clerks and judges from Burgas DC and RC, Rousse DC and RC, Plovdiv DC and RC, Sofia AC, City C and Cassation C	1/15/03	1/17/03	3	4	24	0	28	84	Steli Peteva, UNDP Community Centers Project; Rumen Minkovski, Sofia University; V. Gudeva Gabrovo DC, Nandia Stefanova Sofia DC, Anna Zoximova Sofia RC
2	Customer Service	Court Clerks from 15 courts	1/23/03	1/24/03	2	0	42	0	42	84	NCCA Members: Roza Gueorgieva, Katya Gurneva, Evelina Gueraskova, Silvia Stoyanova
3	Stress and Time Management	Court Clerks from 13 courts	1/30/03	1/31/03	2	0	22	0	22	44	JDP Staff: Vassilka Stamatova, Anna Slivkova
4	Remedial Grammar	Court Secretaries from 18 courts	2/6/03	2/7/03	2	0	27	0	27	54	JDP Staff: Vassilka Stamatova, Anna Slivkova
5	Team Building Training	Clerks and judges from Vidin DC and RC, S. Zagora DC and RC, Silistra DC and RC, Montana DC	2/12/03	2/14/03	3	5	14	0	19	57	Steli Peteva, UNDP Community Centers Project; V. Gudeva Gabrovo DC, Nandia Stefanova Sofia DC, Anna Zoximova Sofia RC
6	Training of Trainers, Basic Level	Clerks from 12 courts	3/19/03	3/21/03	3	0	19	0	19	57	Donka Gencheva, Judge in Sofia City C, Nikolai Enchev, Judge in Sofia RC, Ekaterina Encheva, Judge in Sofia RC, Roza Gueorgieva, Clerk in Sofia City C
7	Grammar Training	Clerks from 14 courts	4/3/03	4/4/03	2	0	25	0	25	50	JDP Staff: Vassilka Stamatova, Anna Slivkova

YEAR: 2003											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
8	Team Building Training	Clerks from 6 courts	4/9/03	4/11/03	3	3	14	0	17	51	Steli Peteva, UNDP Community Centers Project; V. Gudeva Gabrovo DC, Nandia Stefanova Sofia DC, Anna Zoximova Sofia RC
9	Hiring Procedures	Chairpersons from 28 District and Regional Courts	4/18/03	4/18/03	1	34	2	0	36	36	Bobbi Griffin, JDP; JDP Staff Attorneys
10	Training of Trainers, Advanced Level	Clerks from 13 courts	4/16/03	4/18/03	3	0	21	0	21	63	Donka Gencheva, Judge in Sofia City C, Nikolai Enchev, Judge in Sofia RC, Ekaterina Encheva, Judge in Sofia RC
11	Customer Service	Court Clerks from 11 district and regional courts	5/26/03	5/27/03	2	0	37	0	37	74	Roza Georgieva, Clerk, Sofia City Court; Katia Gurneva, Clerk, Sofia RC
12	Remedial Grammar	Court Secretaries from 10 district and regional courts	5/22/03	5/23/03	2	0	19	0	19	38	Anna Slivkova JDP; Vassilka Stamatova JDP
13	Trainers Retreat	Court Trainers from 25 courts	5/31/03	6/1/03	2	0	36	0	36	72	Eliana Anguelova JDP
14	Stress and Time Management	Court Secretaries from 16 regional and district courts	6/2/03	6/3/03	2	0	28	0	28	56	Anna Slivkova JDP; Vassilka Stamatova JDP
15	Case Flow Management	Judges from 14 regional and district courts and 2 lawyers from Albania	6/9/03	6/11/03	3	17	0	0	17	51	Bobbi Griffin, JDP; JDP Staff Attorneys
16	National Court Clerks Training Conference (Model Hiring, Orientation, Stress)	Court Clerks from 87 courts	6/11/03	6/12/03	2	0	95	0	95	190	Anna Slivkova JDP; Vassilka Stamatova JDP; Bobbi Griffin, JDP; JDP Staff Attorneys; 5 clerk trainers
17	Orientation Manual Training	Court Clerks and secretaries from 5 courts	7/3/03	7/3/03	1	0	17	0	17	17	Ivelina Koleva; Kina Vylcheva; Sonya Baleva

YEAR: 2003											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
18	Orientation Manual Training	Court Clerks and secretaries from 9 courts	7/9/03	7/9/03	1	0	16	0	16	16	Boryana Mihova; Veselina Gydeva Gabrovo DC; Venera Mincheva
19	Stress and Time Management	Court Clerks and secretaries from 13 courts	7/10/03	7/11/03	2	0	25	0	25	50	Ivelina Trifonova; Petya Simeonova; Anna Slivkova JDP; Vasilka Stamatova JDP
20	Remedial Grammar	Court Clerks and secretaries from 12 courts	9/25/03	9/26/03	2	0	20	0	20	40	Marlena Yordanova, Mirena Stefanova, Milena Levashka, Anna Slivkova
21	Customer Service	Court clerks and secretaries from 16 courts	10/2/03	10/3/03	2	0	36	0	36	72	Lilia Zareva RC Dupnica, Roza Georgieva Sofia CC, Katya Gurneva RC Sofia
22	Supervisory Training Basic group 1	Judges and Administrative secretaries from 5 courts	10/1/03	10/3/03	3	8	2	0	10	30	Dr. Veselina Penevska, Todor Mindilikov
23	Labor Training	Court Clerks and secretaries from 107 courts	10/1/03	10/2/03	2	0	110	0	110	220	Marieta Proynova Sofia DC, Wladimir Yordanov RC Sofia, Georgi Georgiev SJC, Velislava Delcheva JDP,
24	Summons Training	Summons Clerks from Blagoevgrad DC & RC, Sofia RC & City Court	10/6/03	10/7/03	2	0	19	0	19	38	Valentina Puncheva Sofia City Court, Krasimira Danailova JDP, Velislava Delcheva JDP
25	Team Building Training	Court Clerks from Blagoevgrad DC&RC	10/13/03	10/14/03	2	0	27	0	27	54	Anna Zoksimova RC Sofia, Veselinka Gadeva DC Gabrovo, Nadka Stefanova DC Sofia
26	Team Building Training	Court Clerks from Blagoevgrad DC&RC	10/15/03	10/16/03	2	0	28	0	28	56	Anna Zoksimova RC Sofia, Veselinka Gadeva DC Gabrovo, Nadka Stefanova DC Sofia
27	Case Flow Management	Judges & Clerks from MPC's & CIP's	10/13/03	10/16/03	4	35	6	0	41	164	Maureen Solomon, Velislava Delcheva, Krasimira Danailova, Radostina Mihalkova

YEAR: 2003											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
28	Case Flow Management for Attorneys	Attorneys from all over the Country	10/20/03	10/20/03	1	0	0	19	19	19	Maureen Solomon, Velislava Delcheva, Krasimira Danailova, Radostina Mihalkova
29	Supervisory Training Basic group 2	Judges and Administrative secretaries from 6 courts	10/22/03	10/24/03	3	5	7	0	12	36	Ph.D.Vesselina Penevska, Ph.D Lidia Vasileva
30	Supervisory Training Advanced - group 1	Judges and Administrative secretaries from 5 courts	10/29/03	10/31/03	3	7	2	0	9	27	Ph.D.Vesselina Penevska, Ph.D Lidia Vasileva
31	Change Management Training	Montana DC	10/29/03	10/29/03	1	11	15	0	26	26	Virginia Leavitt, Eliana Anguelova
32	Change Management Training	Shumen RC	11/3/03	11/3/03	1	15	26	0	41	41	Virginia Leavitt, Eliana Anguelova
33	Change Management Training	Sevlievo RC	11/4/03	11/4/03	1	10	19	0	29	29	Virginia Leavitt, Eliana Anguelova
34	Change Management Training	Vratza DC	11/5/03	11/5/03	1	11	28	0	39	39	Virginia Leavitt, Eliana Anguelova
35	Change Management Training	Kyustendil DC	11/6/03	11/6/03	1	14	17	0	31	31	Virginia Leavitt, Eliana Anguelova
36	Summons Training	Intake and Summons Clerks from Chepelare RC, G.Delchev RC, Sofia City Court	11/06/03	11/07/03	2	0	25	0	25	50	Krasimira Danailova JDP, Valentina Puncheva Cvetanka Yordanova Sofia City Court
37	Change Management Training	Gotze Delchev RC	11/18/03	11/18/03	1	8	13	0	21	21	Virginia Leavitt, Eliana Anguelova
38	Change Management Training	Chepelare RC	11/19/03	11/19/03	1	3	11	0	14	14	Virginia Leavitt, Eliana Anguelova
39	Change Management Training	Kurdjali DC	11/20/03	11/20/03	1	8	22	0	30	30	Virginia Leavitt, Eliana Anguelova
40	Change Management Training	Sofia RC Criminal Division	11/21/03	11/21/03	1	7	32	0	39	39	Virginia Leavitt, Eliana Anguelova

YEAR: 2003											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
41	Supervisory Training Advanced - group 2	Judges and Administrative secretaries from 5 courts	11/26/03	11/28/03	3	4	3	0	7	21	Ph.D.Vesselina Penevska, Ph.D Lidia Vasileva
42	Customer Service	Blagoevgrad RC & DC	12/3/03	12/4/03	2	0	21	0	21	42	Lilia Zareva RC Dupnica, Lilia Stoilova AC Sofia
43	Customer Service	Blagoevgrad RC & DC	12/4/03	12/5/03	2	0	23	0	23	46	Lilia Zareva RC Dupnica, Lilia Stoilova AC Sofia
Total 2003					85	209	995	19	1223	2329	

YEAR: 2004											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
1	Team Building	Chepelare RC	1/15/04	1/16/04	2	3	7	1	11	22	Anna Zoksimova RC Sofia, Nadka Stefanova DC Sofia, Rositsa Hristova Silistra DC, Dilyana Nikolova Shumen RC
2	New Clerks Orientation Training	Sofia RC	1/23/04	1/23/04	1	0	16	0	16	16	Petya Simeonova Sofia RC, Katya Gurneva Sofia RC
3	Team Building	Gotse Delchev RC	2/13/04	2/14/04	2	2	12	3	17	34	Anna Zoksimova RC Sofia, Rositsa Hristova Silistra DC, Vesselina Gadeva Gabrovo DC, Sonya Baleva and Ivelina Koleva from Stara Zagora RC
4	Customer Service Training	Court Clerks from 17 courts	2/19/04	2/20/04	2	0	35	0	35	70	Roza Georgieva Sofia City Court, Liliana Stoilova Sofia AC, Vesela Ilieva Blagoevgrad DC
5	Supervisory Training III	Judges and Administrative secretaries from 5 courts	2/25/04	2/27/04	3	9	3	1	13	39	Ph.D.Vesselina Penevska, Dragomira Shuleva, Steli Peteva
6	Summons Process	Summons and intake clerks from 5 courts	3/4/04	3/5/04	2	0	26	0	26	52	Velislava Delcheva JDP, Valentina Puncheva and Cvetanka Yordanova Sofia City Court
7	Team Building	Vratsa DC	3/11/04	3/12/04	2	8	9	0	17	34	Nadka Stefanova DC Sofia, Sonya Baleva and Ivelina Koleva from Stara Zagora RC
8	TOT Basic	CIP/ MPC	3/16/04	3/19/04	4	1	11	3	15	60	Roza Georgieva - Clerk in Sofia City C, Katya Gurneva - Clerk in Sofia RC, Donka Gencheva, Judge in Sofia City C, Nikolai Enchev, Judge in Sofia RC

YEAR: 2004											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
9	Remedial Grammar	Court Secretaries from 12 courts	3/18/04	3/19/04	2	0	25	0	25	50	Marlena Yordanova Kurdzialy DC, Milena Levashka Plovdiv DC, Donka Aleksandrova Montana DC
10	New Clerks Orientation Training	Court Clerks from 8 courts	3/26/04	3/26/04	1	0	19	0	19	19	Petya Simeonova Sofia RC, Katya Gurneva Sofia RC
11	Personnel Training for Adm.Secretaries	Administrative Secretaries from 114 courts	4/1/04	4/2/04	2	0	114	0	114	228	Aspasia Petkova NSI, Vania Pnagonova SJC, Daniela Petrovska SJC, Lidia Evlogieva SJC, Cveta Markova Chair Commission of Security of information
12	Stress and Time Management	CIP/ MPC	4/1/04	4/2/04	2	0	20	0	20	40	Valentina Koleva from Sofia AC, Ivelina Koleva and Kina Valcheva from Stara Zagora RC
13	Summons Process	Summons and intake clerks from 7 courts	4/8/04	4/9/04	2	0	28	1	29	58	Velislava Delcheva JDP, Valentina Puncheva and Cvetanka Yordanova Sofia City Court
14	Customer Service Training	Intake clerks from 17 courts	4/15/04	4/16/04	2	0	39	0	39	78	Vesela Ilieva - Blagoevgrad DC, Lilia Dimitrova-Zareva- Dupnitsa RC
15	Team Building	Kyustendil DC	4/22/04	4/23/04	2	6	12	1	19	38	Anna Zoksimova RC Sofia, Vesselina Gadeva Gabrovo DC

YEAR: 2004											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
16	Work on Civil Cases Training	Intake clerks from 8 courts	4/29/04	4/30/04	2	0	19	0	19	38	Velislava Delcheva JDP, Ivanka Stoykova - Gotse Delchev RC
17	Court Executives Training: Leadership Skills	Chairpersons, judges and court clerks with administrative functions from 10 courts, representatives of SJC administration	5/11/04	5/13/04	3	8	12	3	23	69	Skip Mullaney, Consultant from USA
18	Team Building	Sevlievo RC	5/13/04	5/14/04	2	4	14	0	18	36	Nadka Stefanova DC Sofia, Rositsa Hristova Silistra DC
19	TOT Advanced	CIP/ MPC	5/17/04	5/19/04	3	0	12	1	13	39	Roza Georgieva - Clerk in Sofia City C, Katya Gurneva - Clerk in Sofia RC, Nikolai Enchev - Judge in Sofia RC, Emilia Vassileva - Judge in Sofia AC
20	Remedial Grammar	Court secretaries from 15 courts	5/20/04	5/21/04	2	0	29	0	29	58	Marlena Yordanova-Kurdzialy DC, Milena Levashka -Plovdiv DC, Krasimira Georgieva-V.Turnovo DC
21	New Clerks Orientation Training	Court clerks from 9 courts	5/21/04	5/21/04	1	0	22	0	22	22	Ivelina Koleva-Clerk in RC St.Zagora, Kina Valcheva-Clerk in RC St.Zagora
22	Work on Criminal Cases Training	Intake clerks from 8 courts	5/28/04	5/28/04	1	0	16	0	16	16	Verginia Dimitrova - Chair, Chepelare RC; Krasimira Doychinova - AC Sofia; Ema Alabasheva - RC Zlatograd

YEAR: 2004

	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
23	Trainers' Retreat	Court trainers from 18 courts	6/4/04	6/5/04	2	13	26	1	40	80	Anna Zoksimova RC Sofia, Emilia Vassileva AC Sofia, Milena Levashka DC Plovdiv, Svetla kalinova SCC, Totka Kalcheva AC Sofia
24	Team Building	Judges and Clerks from Shumen DC and RC	6/10/04	6/11/04	2	7	31	0	38	76	Rositsa Hristova - Silistra DC, Anna Zoksimova - RC Sofia
25	Stress and Time Management	Court clerks from 13 courts	6/17/04	6/18/04	2	0	26	0	26	52	Valentina Koleva from Sofia AC, Daniela Ilieva - Sofia RC, Petya Siemonova - Sofia RC
26	Customer Service Training	Court clerks from 14 courts	6/17/04	6/18/04	2	0	28	0	28	56	Lilia Dimitrova- Zareva - RC Dupnitsa, Roza Georgieva - Sofia City Court
27	Work on Civil Cases Training	Court clerks from 12 courts	6/25/04	6/25/04	1	0	23	0	23	23	Velislava Delcheva and Eliana Anguelova - JDP
28	New Clerks Orientation Training	Court clerks from 11 courts	6/25/04	6/25/04	1	0	22	0	22	22	Ivelina Koleva-Clerk in RC St.Zagora, Kina Valcheva-Clerk in RC St.Zagora
29	National Court Clerks Training Conference /Summons Tr., New Clerks Orientation Tr., Leadership Tr.	Court clerks from 32 courts	7/1/04	7/2/04	2	0	85	0	85	170	Velislava Delcheva, Presiana Manolova and Eliana Anguelova - JDP, Valentina Puncheva and Cvetanka Yordanova - Sofia City Court, Roza Georgieva - Sofia City Court, Boryana Mihova - Gabrovo DC, Daniela Stoyanova - Montana DC

YEAR: 2004											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
30	Team Building	Judges and Clerks form Montana DC and RC	7/8/04	7/9/04	2	12	14	0	26	52	Anna Zoksimova - RC Sofia, Nadka Stefanova - DC Sofia
31	Media Training, Basic	Representatives from NCCA,NIJ and SJC, Judges from 10 courts	9/9/2004	9/11/2004	3	14	2	4	20	60	Dimitar Sotirov - Bulgarian Media Coalition, Vassil Tchobanov - Radio "New Europe", Jana Nikolova- "Novinar" Newspaper, Galina Spasova - BNR "Horizont"
32	Team Building	Judges and Clerks from Kurdzhali DC and RC, Ardino RC, Krumovgrad RC and Momchilgrad RC	9/16/04	9/17/04	2	8	18	0	26	52	Anna Zoksimova - RC Sofia, Vesselinka Gudeva - DC Gabrovo
33	Customer Service Training	Clerks from Supreme Cassation Court, Supreme Administrative Court, Sliven RC, Sandanski RC, Karlovo RC, Svilendgrad RC, Lom RC, Sliven DC, Plovdiv RC, Haskovo RC, Devin RC, Razlog RC, Vidin RC	9/23/04	9/24/04	2	0	26	0	26	52	Lilia Dimitrova- Zareva - RC Dupnitsa, Vessela Ilieva - DC Blagoevgrad
34	New Clerk Orientation	Court Clerks	10/1/04	10/1/04	1	0	22	1	23	23	Petya Simeonova Sofia RC, Roza Georgieva Sofia City Court
35	Meeting of Local Training Coordinators	Court Training Liaisons from 20 CIPs and MPs	10/1/04	10/1/04	1	0	20	1	21	21	Irina Nikolova, Plamena Gribneva and Virginia Leavitt - JDP

YEAR: 2004											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
36	Team Building	Smolyan DC and RC	10/7/04	10/8/04	2	6	11	0	17	34	Nadka Stefanova DC Sofia, Rositsa Hristova Silistra DC
37	Stress and Time Management	Court Clerks from 17 courts	10/7/04	10/8/04	2	0	29	1	30	60	Valentina Koleva from Sofia AC, Ivelina Koleva from Stara Zagora RC
38	Media Training, Advanced	Representatives from NACC, NIJ, Judges from 10 courts, Judges and Press attaches from 7 courts	10/10/04	10/11/04	2	8	3	2	13	26	Dimitar Sotirov - Bulgarian Media Coalition, Vassil Tchobanov - Radio "New Europe", Jana Nikolova- "Novinar" Newspaper, Galina Spasova - BNR "Horizont"
39	Leadership Skills	Judges and Clerks with Supervisory Functions	10/14/04	10/15/04	2	6	6	0	12	24	Eliana Anguelova and Presiana Manolova - JDP
40	Summons Process	Summons and intake clerks from 15 courts	10/14/04	10/15/04	2	0	29	0	29	58	Velislava Delcheva JDP, Valentina Puncheva and Cvetanka Yordanova Sofia City Court
41	TOT Basic	Judges and Court Clerks	10/20/04	10/22/04	3	5	3	7	15	45	Totka Kalcheva - Sofia Appellate Court, Svetla Kalinova - Supreme Court of Cassation
42	CATP, Strategic Planning Module	Judges and Court Clerks with Supervisory Functions	10/20/04	10/22/04	3	11	11	4	26	78	Skip Mullaney, Consultant from USA
43	Work on Criminal Cases Training	Court Clerks	10/28/04	10/29/04	2	0	30	0	30	60	Verginia Dimitrova - Chair, Chepelare RC; Krasimira Doychinova - AC Sofia; Presiana Manolova - JDP
44	Work on Civil Cases Training	Court Clerks	10/28/04	10/28/04	1	0	24	1	25	25	Velislava Delcheva and Mariana Karadzhova - JDP, Ivanka Stoykova and Velichka Tersieva - Gotse Delchev RC
45	Team Building	Court Clerks from Sofia DC	11/4/04	11/5/04	2	0	8	0	8	16	Sonya Baleva and Ivelina Koleva from Stara Zagora RC

YEAR: 2004											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
46	Stress and Time Management	Court Clerks from 15 courts	11/4/04	11/5/04	2	0	29	0	29	58	Daniela Ilieva - Sofia RC and Stanka Tashkova - Sofia Court of Appeals
47	Team Building	Judges and Court Clerks from Gabrovo DC and RC	11/11/04	11/12/04	2	2	15	2	19	38	Anna Zoksimova - RC Sofia, Nadka Stefanova - DC Sofia
48	Remedial Grammar for Court Secretaries	Court Secretaries	11/11/04	11/12/04	2	0	27	0	27	54	Venera Mincheva- V.Turnovo DC, Krasimira Georgieva - V.Turnovo DC
49	Media Training, Basic	Judges from 5 courts, representative of NCCA	11/14/04	11/16/04	3	12	1	1	14	42	Dimitar Sotirov - Bulgarian Media Coalition, Vassil Tchobanov - Radio "New Europe", Jana Nikolova- "Novinar" Newspaper, Galina Spasova - BNR "Horizont"
50	Work on Criminal Cases Training	Court Clerks	11/18/04	11/19/04	2	0	21	0	21	42	Verginia Dimitrova - Chair, Chepelare RC; Krasimira Doychinova - AC Sofia; Presiana Manolova - JDP
51	Summons Process	Summoning Clerks	11/25/04	11/26/04	2	0	30	0	30	60	Velislava Delcheva JDP, Valentina Puncheva and Cvetanka Yordanova Sofia City Court
52	Judicial Conference	All Bulgarian Judges	12/10/04	12/11/04	2	1100	0	200	1300	2600	<u>Criminal Procedure Code Reform:</u> Rumen Nenkov - Supreme Court of Cassation; Daniela Atanasova - Deputy Minister of Justice, Jose Miguel Garcia Moreno - Resident Twinning Advisor; <u>Judicial Cooperation:</u> Jean-Hugues Gay - Deputy Chairperson, Nanterre District Court, France; Jean Michel Peltier - French Liaison Magistrate for Czech Republic; Pavel Zeman

YEAR: 2004

	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
											- General Prosecutor - Eurojust for Czech Republic; Mauricio Murillo Garcia-Atance - Magistrate, International Judicial Network of Spain; Civil Procedure Code Reform: Blagovest Punev - Deputy Chairperson, Supreme Court of Cassation; Otto Oberhammer - Project Leader, Phare Project; Borislav Belazelkov - Judge, Supreme Court of Cassation; <u>Judicial Cooperation in Civil Matters:</u> Brigitte Melchart - Judge, Klagenfurt District Court, Austria; Susette Schuster - Pre-Accession Advisor, phare Project; Ruzha Ivanova - Legal Advisor for the President of the RB; ECHR Articles 5 and 6: Experiences in Application: Willi Fuhrmann - Former Judge, European Court of Human Rights; Martin Kuijer, responsible for Defence of Netherlands in cases before ECHR; <u>Characteristics of Organized Crime Cases:</u> Vassil Kirilov - Director, Financial Intelligence Agency; Ivo Haramlijski - Chairperson, Petrich RC; <u>Tools for Civil Enforcement:</u> Jos Uitdehaag, Board of the Royal Dutch Organization of Enforcement Agents; Peter Joham - Expert, Phare Project; Juergen Becker -

YEAR: 2004											
	Programs	Target Audience	Beginning date	End date	Days	Judges	Clerks	Others	All Attend.	Person days	Faculty
											Task Manager, Social Affairs, Delegation of EU Commission to Bulgaria; Preparing for EU Membership: Ivan Bizjk - Former Minister of Justice of Slovenia.
Total 2004					104	1245	1120	239	2604	5175	
GRAND TOTAL 2000 – 2004					265	1784	3139	262	5185	9956	